

Leadership Transitions

By Joel Seligman

THE UNIVERSITY HAS BENEFITED FROM AN unusually stable senior leadership team. For six of the last seven years, we have had very few changes in our senior leadership.

This year, however, we are addressing four important transitions. In September 2013, Chief Advancement Officer Jim Thompson began a medical leave. Subsequently, Jim and I agreed that he would transition to a position as special counsel to the president to focus on strategic Advancement issues.

During the past eight years, Jim achieved virtually everything that we set out to accomplish in Advancement. With 18 months to go, we are on track to reach the \$1.2 billion goal of *The Meliora Challenge*, the largest Campaign in our history, by June 30, 2016. We have strengthened alumni relationships. Jim built an outstanding Advancement program and team. Working particularly with Board Development Committee Chair Larry Bloch '75, Jim took the initiative in developing an ambitious strategic and implementation plan that today is ahead of schedule for virtually every area, including our Annual Fund, which is among the fastest growing in the country, new volunteer boards such as our National Councils and Regional Cabinets, and the Wilson Society, which will recognize those who make planned gifts to the University. Working with Larry, I am leading the search for a new chief advancement officer.

Larry and his wife, Cindy, have generously created an endowed position which will be known as the James D. Thompson Chief Advancement Officer. The Blochs' significant gift and choice to recognize Jim at the same time will ensure that we continue to build on Jim's hard work and great success.

In September, Simon Business School Dean Mark Zupan announced that after 10 years he would pass the baton to a new dean on July 1, 2014. Mark also has achieved an exemplary record. During his deanship, nine new tenure-eligible faculty joined the school; supportive alumni, friends, faculty, and staff contributed \$67 million of the school's \$85 million Campaign goal. This support has allowed Simon to add 10 new



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endowed professorships. Curricular innovations such as a master's program in medical management and an MS in finance have resulted in strong student demand and enabled Simon to achieve the University's target 5.5 percent endowment draw. Next academic year, Mark will become the John M. Olin Distinguished Professor of Economics and Public Policy and be director of the Bradley Policy Research Center when he returns to the faculty. I now also am chairing the Simon School Dean Search Committee.

On September 23, the Joan and Martin Messinger Dean of the Eastman School of Music Doug Lowry resigned because of deteriorating health. The Board of Trustees earlier had unanimously voted to award Doug an honorary doctor of music degree

and later voted to rename the central hallway in Eastman Theatre in Doug's honor.

Doug led Eastman during its renovation and expansion of Eastman Theatre; he unified the Eastman community and hired outstanding faculty. Doug was, as an associate memorably stated, a polymath with a heart. He personified absolute integrity and creativity in advancing the musical arts. He was the rarest of academic administrators: a great dean who also was a great man.

On October 2, we all lost a dear friend when Doug died. Schubert wrote: "Some people come into our lives, leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never the same." For me, Doug was such a person. Provost Peter Lennie is leading the search for the next Eastman dean.

In November 2013, after a gala celebration of the Memorial Art Gallery's centennial, Grant Holcomb, the Mary W. and Donald R. Clark Director of the MAG, announced he would retire in July. During Grant's illustrious 29-year career, the gallery has enhanced its permanent collection, held high-profile exhibitions presenting artists such as Maxfield Parrish, Edgar Degas, Georgia O'Keefe, and Jacob Lawrence, added Vanden Brul Pavilion to link the original 1913 building to Cutler Union, and recently completed the Centennial Sculpture Park.

Among gallery directors, Grant has been a national leader in reaching out to broader constituencies. He has helped popularize the gallery's exceptional educational programs, supporting collaborations with, among others, Garth Fagan Dance, George Eastman House, the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Eastman School. Former MAG Board President Jim Durfee is leading a search for Grant's successor.

Jim, Mark, Doug, and Grant each made extraordinary contributions to our University and deserve our warm plaudits, especially for their hard work and inspired leadership. Each leaves an impressive legacy on which we will build.

No leader leads forever, and leadership transitions are inevitable. I am confident that great leaders will succeed Jim, Mark, Doug, and Grant. As we make these transitions, I want to express my personal gratitude again to each for a job well done. 